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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Seventy-second year

Identical letters dated 31 March 2017 from the Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General, the President of the General Assembly and the President of the Security Council

Hope for a just and comprehensive peace between Israel and the State of Palestine is rapidly diminishing as Israel, the occupying Power, continues with its systematic policies of settler colonialism, apartheid and ethnic cleansing in the Occupied State of Palestine, including East Jerusalem. It is absolutely urgent that the international community, particularly the Security Council, act to bring Israel into compliance with international law and United Nations resolutions, including, resolution 2334 (2016).

In another sharp rebuke to international efforts to bring about a political horizon for peace, Israel continues with its unapologetic rejection of peace and continues, with brazen intent, to pursue its illegal schemes with another announcement for more illegal settlements to be built in Occupied Palestine. In fact, the announcement on 30 March 2017 by Israel's so-called "security cabinet" was different from its previous announcements of illegal settlement-building in existing settlements; this announcement was for an entirely new illegal settlement — one in the heart of Palestine — aimed at placating the extremist settlers from the illegal settlement of "Amona".

According to the Israeli non-governmental organization Peace Now, the decision taken on 30 March 2017 includes three major advancements of illegal settlements in the Occupied West Bank. It includes "the establishment of a new settlement, deep in the West Bank and for the first time since 1991; the publication of tenders for nearly 2,000 housing units; and the declaration of almost 1,000 dunams as 'public lands,' otherwise termed 'state lands,' that will enable the 'retroactive legalization' of three outposts, 'Palgei Maim', 'Givat Haroeh' and 'Adei Ad', all located north of Ramallah and deep in the West Bank." Those latest announcements are not only a violation of Security Council resolution 2334 (2016)

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but are also a grave breach of the Fourth Geneva Convention, notably article 49 and article 33, as well as a war crime under the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, which stipulates that an occupying Power is prohibited from transferring, directly or indirectly, parts of its own population into the occupied territory.

It is clear by its continuing actions and policies that Israel has no reservations about blatantly disrespecting world opinion or international law as it continues with its expansion and building of illegal settlements throughout the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. Hanan Ashrawi, an Executive Committee Member of the Palestine Liberation Organization, stated that this latest announcement proves that Israel's right wing pro-settler government, under Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, "is more committed to appeasing its illegal settler population than to abiding by the requirements for stability and a just peace".

The Palestinian leadership strongly condemns this recent Israeli announcement, which comes less than one week after the report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2334 (2016), which was delivered to the Council in an oral briefing on 24 March 2017 by the Special Coordinator for the Middle East Peace Process and Personal Representative of the Secretary-General, Nickolay Mladenov. In the report, it was clearly stated, inter alia, that even though the Security Council, in paragraph 2 of resolution 2334 (2016), "reiterates its demand that Israel immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem", Israel has taken no such steps in this regard during the reporting period. In the report it was noted that, on the contrary, since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), there was a notable increase in statements, announcements and decisions related to settlement construction and expansion. In this regard, we welcome the reaffirmation on 31 March 2017 by the Secretary-General, through his spokesperson, that reiterated the findings in his report, stated again the obstacle to peace that illegal settlements pose and stated that he "condemns all unilateral actions that, like the present one, threaten peace and undermine the two-State solution".

Israel's reckless actions, which have continued and have been deliberately escalated since the adoption of resolution 2334 (2016), are exacerbating tensions and risking further destabilization of the fragile situation on the ground. It is high time for the international community to go beyond condemnation or expressing outrage about Israel's illegal practices of colonization. Urgent and concrete action is required. The international community must not allow Israel to continue to act above the law without consequences. The fact that the occupying Power has been allowed to maintain its occupation and subjugation of an entire nation of people for 50 years has been in large part because the international community has yet to take the required and necessary actions to bring a halt to Israel's crimes.

We therefore call for immediate action and follow-up to Israel's violations, including its violation of resolution 2334 (2016). The time has come for the members of the international community to choose between the pursuit of peace and justice or to allow for more unilateral, illegal Israeli moves which will only bring further destabilization and bloodshed. It is way overdue for the world to stand up to the occupying Power and demand an end to its brutal military occupation and an end

to its blatant disregard for the human rights of the Palestinian people and their land, and allow them to live as a free people in their own independent State of Palestine, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

The present letter is in follow-up to our 607 previous letters regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which constitutes the territory of the State of Palestine. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 23 March 2017 (A/ES-10/747-S/2017/251), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, acts of State terrorism and systematic human rights violations being committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer of the State of Palestine
to the United Nations